

Ypsilanti GLEANINGS

Official publication of the Ypsilanti Historical Society, featuring historical articles and reminisces of the people and places in the Ypsilanti area.



SUMMER 2011

Civil War – Comrades in Arms

Researched and Written by Margaret M. Freeman

In the summer of 1862, four young men from Ypsilanti Township enlisted in the Twenty Fourth Michigan Infantry Regiment, Company F, in Detroit, Wayne County. It later became known as the "Iron Brigade." Recruiting had been designated to begin on the 19th of July but recruiters were not actually organized until the 26th of July. Sheldon E. Crittenden, age 25, the oldest, enlisted on July 30th, Levi S. Freeman, age 22, enlisted on August 3rd, and brothers, William R.,

Village of Rawsonville, in Ypsilanti Township, Washtenaw County, Michigan.

Mortimer and Jeanette (Hurd) Crittenden were the parents of Sheldon, who was born on October 23, 1837 in Gorham, New York, the third child in a family of ten, five sons and five daughters. The oldest five children were born in the state of New York, while the youngest five were born in Ypsilanti Township, Michigan. The family came to this area in about



Corporal Levi S. Freeman (left) in his government issued uniform in August of 1862. Corporal Freeman (right) after his release from Andersonville Confederate prison in Georgia and his recovery from injuries.

age 22, enlisted on August 13th and Frank T. Shier, age 19, enlisted on August 23rd. Recruiting ended in August, with the maximum limit of 10 companies of 1,030 men.

All four of these men were sons of early pioneer farmers who lived less than a mile from each other, about one to two miles from the

1842, when Sheldon was 3 years old. The Register of Deeds in Ann Arbor, recorded on August 21, 1844, that Mortimer Crittenden purchased a farm of eighty acres on the west half of the southeast quarter of section 14, T3SR7E, Ypsilanti Township, Washtenaw County, State of Michigan, from Warren and
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From the President's Desk

By Alvin E. Rudisill

There never seems to be a break in all the activity in and around the YHS Museum and Archives. Spring projects included "brick tucking" on both the Museum and Carriage House, repair of the support structure under the handicapped entrance at the back of the Museum, repair and resurfacing of the floors in the old gift shop, the William Edmunds Ypsilanti Room and the first floor office, and painting the rooms where the floors were repaired.

Kathy and Jenn, our renters in the lower level of the Carriage House, have taken over the responsibility for yard work on the property. Many flower beds have been expanded and others added and we are receiving many complements on the appearance of the grounds.

We appreciate very much the support of all the volunteers who assisted with the annual yard sale. This was the most successful yard sale ever held and a special thanks is due Karen and Bill Nickels for hosting the event and for all their efforts over the past year in collecting items for the sale. Please read the article in this issue of the Gleanings on the yard sale.


Our relationship with the graduate program in Historical Preservation at Eastern Michigan University continues with the appointment of two new interns. Lauren Carpenter has been assigned to assist in running the Museum and Deirdre Fortino (Dee) will assist in running the Archives. Our best wishes to former interns Derek

Spinei and Michael Newberry as they complete their graduate programs and pursue their careers.

Considerable effort is being put forth to develop a digitized database of all the collections in the YHS Archives. The database is searchable via computer and has been posted on the Society web site. Our activities at the present time are focused on the organization of our photographic collections which include tintypes, glass slides, negatives and photographs in all sizes and shapes. In addition to digitizing the photographs, appropriate preservation and storage issues are being addressed.

Our next quarterly meeting will be held on Sunday, September 11, from 2:00 to 4:00 pm. We will have a brief business meeting followed by a program. Members will be notified of program details by email or postcard. If you are not currently on our email listserv please call the Museum and have your name added. We are using the listserv only for program notifications. Your email address will not be shared by others.

We are always looking for volunteers as docents for the Museum or research assistants for the Archives. Both the Museum and Archives are open from 2:00 to 5:00 pm Tuesday through Sunday. If you are available during that time and are interested in helping us preserve the historical information and artifacts of the area, or in educating the general public about our history, please give me a call at 734-476-6658. ■



Ypsilanti Historical Society
220 North Huron Street - Ypsilanti, MI 48197

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Welcome: The Ypsilanti Historical Museum is a museum of local history which is presented as an 1860 home. The Museum and Fletcher-White Archives are organized and operated by the Ypsilanti Historical Society. We are all volunteers and our membership is open to everyone, including non-city residents.

A Matter of Trust: The Ypsilanti Historical Society has initiated a five-year campaign to raise \$400,000. This amount will cover the cost of purchasing the property the City and completing the many deferred maintenance projects on the buildings and grounds. You may view a Power Point presentation related to the campaign by clicking your mouse on "A Matter of Trust" and then clicking on the first picture. The arrow at the top of the page will forward the program to the next slide.

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Civil War – Comrades in Arms *continued from front page*

Frances Pease for the sum of eleven hundred and twenty five dollars (\$1,125.00). By 1850 the Agriculture Census showed 60 acres of improved and 15 acres of unimproved land. The five acres not accounted for could have been designated for the Crittenden school house adjoining the farm.

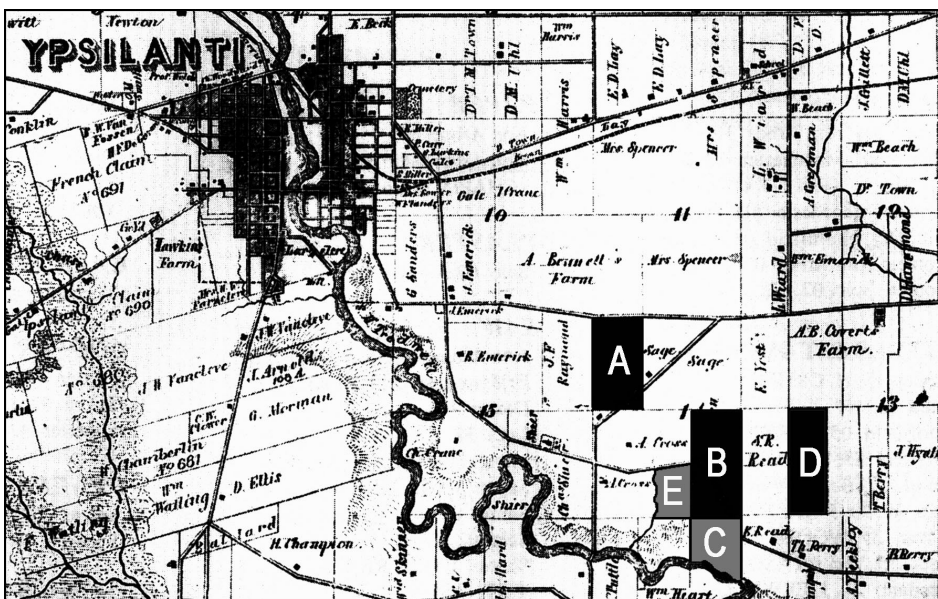
Adam and Almira (Mason Dexter) Freeman were the parents of Levi, who was born on August 21, 1840 in Ypsilanti Township, the seventh child in a family of eight, six sons and two daughters. The oldest son was born in the state of New York, the rest were born in Ypsilanti Township. This was a second marriage for both Adam and Almira, both previous spouses were deceased. Five children were born of Adam's first marriage, only one was living in late 1831. Six (Dexter) children were born of Almira's first marriage, all living in 1831. Their combined families came from New York in 1831 and on February 10, 1832, Adan Freeman purchased 80 acres of public land from the government for \$1.25 per acre on the west half of the northwest quarter of section 14, T3SR7E, Ypsilanti Township in the Territory of Michigan. By 1850 the Agriculture Census showed 60 acres of improved

and 20 acres unimproved land. Michigan became a state January 26, 1837.

George K. and Anne (Tice) Shier were the parents of William, born on November 29, 1839 and Frank, born October 5, 1842, the fifth and sixth children born into a family of seven, five sons and two daughters. The oldest six children were born in Paterson, New Jersey, only the youngest son, John was born in Ypsilanti Township. The Register of Deeds in Ann Arbor recorded on April 5, 1872, that George K. Shier purchased 80 acres of land on July 22, 1844 in Ypsilanti Township, on the southwest quarter of section 13, T3SR7E, from Thomas and Elizabeth Watling for the sum of one hundred and thirty dollars (\$130.00). The 1850 Agriculture census showed 67 acres improved and 13 acres unimproved land. On the Ypsilanti Township 1856 map, oldest sons, George and Henry Shier were owners of this property and in the 1860 population census, the parents and younger family members were living on section 23 across the road from the Mortimer Crittenden Family.

All three families consisted of children born between the corresponding years of 1829 to 1848. The Crittenden children were

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1856 Map of Ypsilanti Township

A - Adam Freeman Homestead C - George Shier Original Homestead E - Crittenden
B - Mortimer Crittenden Homestead D - G. & H. Shier Homestead School House

The 1856 Map of Ypsilanti Township with the family homesteads identified along with the location of the Crittenden School House.

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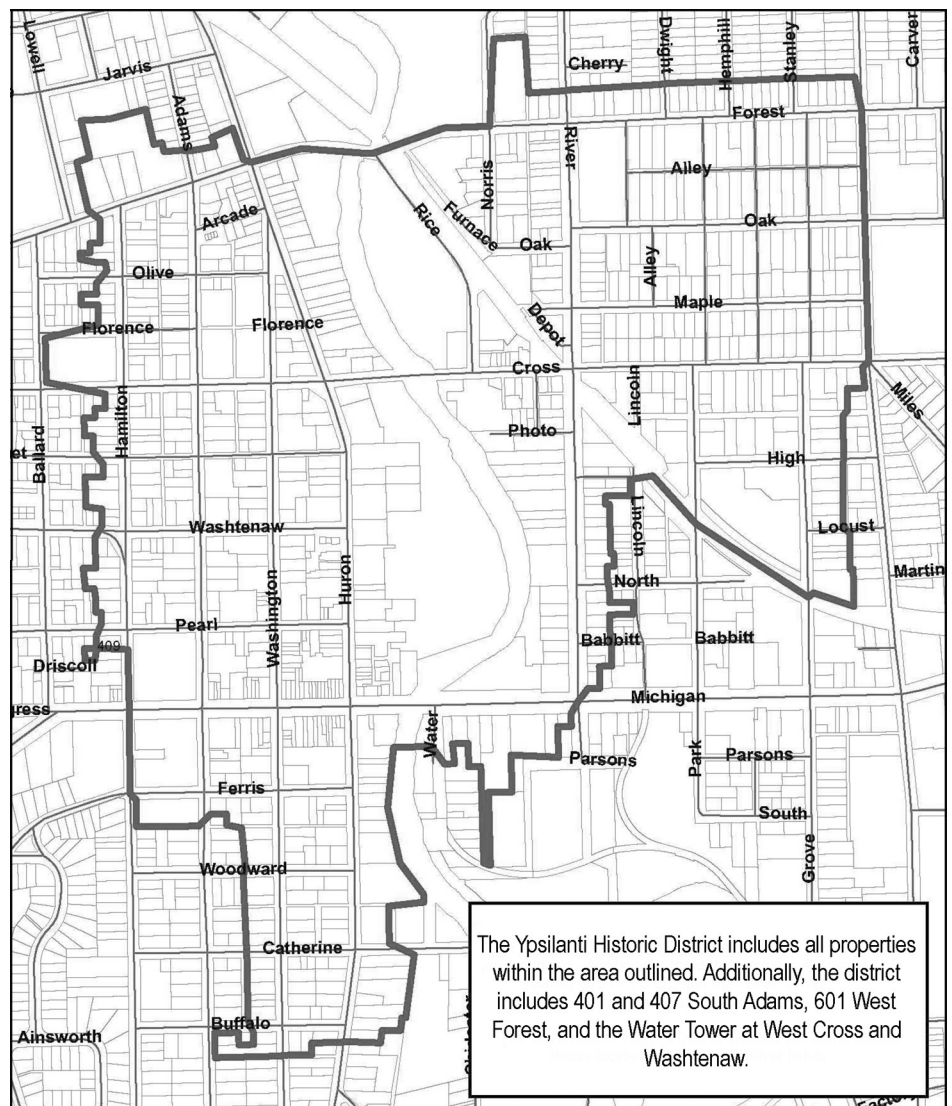
Local Historic Districts

By Michael R. Newberry

Local Historic Districts are a point of pride in a community. Neighborhoods in a local Historic District tend to maintain property values better than comparative neighborhoods located outside of the Historic District. Because they are often comprised of residents concerned with the preservation of examples of quality workmanship and construction, and because they are guided by a commission that upholds standards provided by The Secretary of the Interior, Historic Districts often look better and possess a more unified community than surrounding areas. Residents are rewarded for approved home improvements through State and Federal Tax Credits for Rehabilitation, and pleasant-looking, unified communities often experience lower crime rates in their area as a result.

Ypsilanti currently has the third largest Historic District in Michigan, and this city possesses many examples of valuable architecture within and outside of its current Historic District boundaries. Current neighborhoods within the Historic District include the Historic South Side Neighborhood, the Historic East Side Neighborhood (including Depot Town), Downtown Ypsilanti, and the Riverside Neighborhood. There are many houses and neighborhoods of historic merit that exist outside of the current Historic District, that currently do not receive all of the benefits that are experienced within the District. If Ypsilanti were to consider the creation of four additional Historic Districts, more beautiful neighborhoods could receive these valuable benefits, which could arguably increase the desirability of Ypsilanti, Michigan for home ownership.

Four Ypsilanti neighborhoods possess character traits that would make them excellent candidates for additional Local Historic Districts. Midtown Neighborhood, Woods Road Neighborhood, Normal Park Neighborhood, and College Heights Neighborhood possess unique characteristics that would make them valuable assets to the community as individual Local Historic Districts. Because Local Historic Districts must establish a period of



The current Historic District in Ypsilanti is the third largest in the state of Michigan.

significance, each neighborhood benefits from a focused range of years considered historically significant in their particular neighborhood. This reinforces the notion that all historic homes have the same merit, because they fall within a time period significant to our local, state, or national history. Thus, a ranch house from the 1950s is just as important and worthy of preservation as a Greek Revival farmhouse from the 1840s.

Furthermore, if the current Local Historic District were to be divided into its component parts, and each neighborhood association currently within the District were considered its own Local Historic District, such an act would serve to encourage partnerships with the individual neighborhood associations and its community members. Such partnerships would aid in the dissemination of information

in an effort to educate the community, and it would help further market and define each neighborhood in its own unique way. Essentially, each Local Historic District (neighborhood association) would be in compliance with a basic set of standards, but they would also have their own tailored standards that meet their unique, architectural, and aesthetic needs. Such standards would also enable the Historic District Commission to better serve the community because they would be able to narrow their focus to standards that are tailored to a specific neighborhood. For example, the needs of a homeowner seeking to renovate a 1950s ranch house are very different than the needs of a homeowner renovating an 1860 Italianate home. Effective communication and direct guidance could be provided by the Historic District Commission

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The Ypsilanti Train Flower Girls - Can Their Spirit Move Us Again?

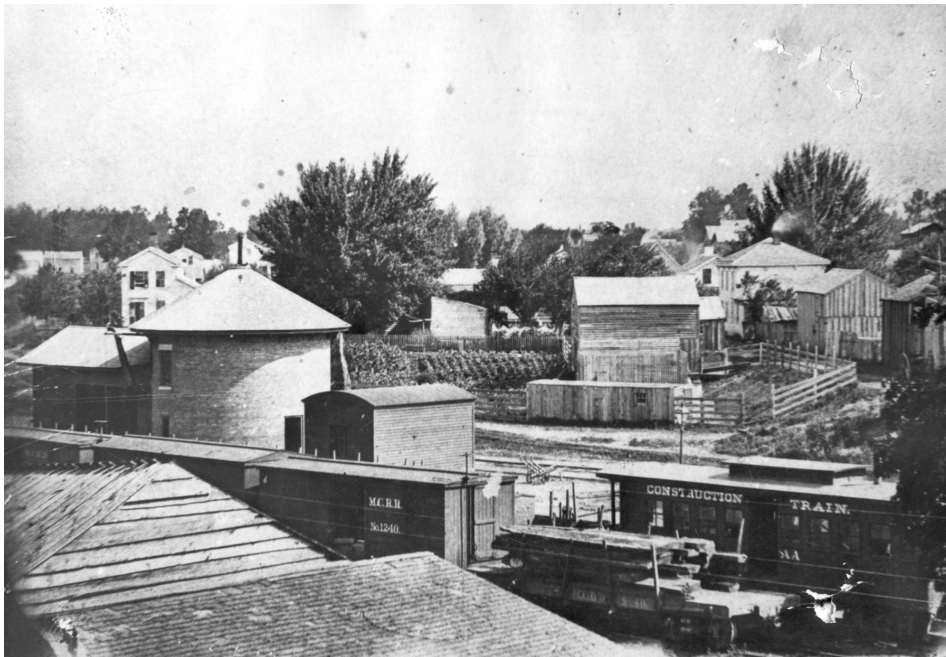
By Janice Anschuetz

In light of current improvements to the Ypsilanti Freight House, and with growing hope for renovation of the old train station and the Thompson Block on North River Street, it seems a good time to look back to another inspired transformation that occurred in the same part of Ypsilanti 120 years ago.

Around the year 1890, the Michigan Central train company became concerned that blight in the area of the train station, especially the smelly stockyard and unattractive oil tanks that occupied the land behind it, were giving a poor impression of Ypsilanti to those who stopped at the train station or looked out from the many trains that passed through the city

The article begins by telling us that "The Michigan Central railroad is said to be contemplating another big improvement at their depot in this city that will add greatly to the beauty and attractiveness of Ypsilanti." It notes that the gardens at the train depot were considered "the prettiest on the road," but that they were cramped for space.

"Just west of the gardens," the article explains, "are located a big ugly oil tank and the unsightly odoriferous stockyards. Now the plan is to move this tank and the evil smelling stockyards and add the ground they occupy to the gardens. . . . The only drawback to the plan is the fact that the officials cannot find a suit-



A view of the area around the Ypsilanti Michigan Central train station in the 1870s.

each day. To counter the negative impression, Michigan Central decided to make a positive change in the area, just as many Ypsilantians are trying to do again today.

In a newspaper article from 1890, we read these headlines: "Planning Change, Michigan Central May Enlarge Gardens"; and "Unsightly Features Such as Stock Yards to Be Taken Away – Will Greatly Improve the Grounds."

able place to put the stockyard or the oil tanks, as no one is especially fond of having either of them in the vicinity." We learn further that, already, "the three story train station was given a new coat of paint and redecorated. . . . The interior was especially shabby, but it certainly looks handsome now."

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General on Display

In the "Demetrius! Where are you?" story in the Spring Issue of the Gleanings, James Mann discussed various portraits of Demetrius Ypsilanti. Bill Anhut gave us a copy of the following article that appeared in the Ypsilanti Press in 1973.

"General on Display – Self-taught artist painted Ypsilanti:

Ypsilanti has a self-tutored artist, the late Edward I. Thompson, to thank for the painting of Demetrius Ypsilanti which now hangs in the Huron Hotel on loan from its owner, Charles L. McKie.

Mr. Thompson never took art instruction but had an unusual talent both for portraiture and landscapes.

The picture of the Greek general for whom Ypsilanti was named was painted in the sign painting and decoration shop of Mr. McKie while he was still doing business in the depot business section. Mr. Thompson turned to drawing and painting when he retired and rented a portion of the McKie shop as a studio.

Both men were interested in the Ypsilanti portrait and collaborated in photographing the statue at the water tower. Step-ladders were used to obtain close ups of the features.



Ypsilanti's portrait on display: *This picture of Gen. Demetrius Ypsilanti is hung in the lobby of the Huron Hotel by the manager, William A. Anhut, in preparation for the formal presentation Tuesday of "Project 73," the plans for the city's sesquicentennial. The portrait is the work of the late Edward Thompson and was loaned by Charles L. McKie. Mr. Thompson, a leading decorator and industrialist in Ypsilanti, turned to art in his retirement. (Press Photo)*

The first version was pleasing to the artist as it was to Miss Gertrude Woodward, who makes her home at the hotel. She had it artistically framed in hand rubbed black walnut and it was presented to the City of Ypsilanti. For a number of years it hung in the council chambers.

It disappeared, possibly about the time the chambers were moved from the first to the second floor. Searches of stored material in City Hall and through the city historical collection have failed to reveal it.

Luckily Mr. Thompson liked the picture. He never made duplicates unless he was pleased, and in this case he made the second one for Mr. McKie.

Mr. McKie has other pictures by Mr. Thompson. One, called "Scrooge," never fails to bring comment at the Mackraft Shop, 172 N. Washington St., where it is displayed.

An interesting picture of the old toll gate on Michigan Ave., painted from memory, is another interesting Thompson picture. It was given to the American Legion Post 282.

Before 1900 Mr. Thompson was the leading decorator in Ypsilanti but gradually relinquished his business as the O. E. Thompson Manufacturing Co. took more and more of his time. He was always interested in art but did not devote much time to it until his later years." ■

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Whooping Cough Prerequisite of Birthday Party

Submitted by George Ridenour

The following is a reprint from the Ypsilanti Daily Press, January 14, 1939.

"To be eligible for the party which Gerald Hawks gave Thursday for William Grannis on his seventh birthday, it was necessary to have had whooping cough, since the youthful host was a victim of the ailment. The guests were all chosen to meet this qualification and a merry time was enjoyed with games and refreshments. Many nice gifts were brought William.

The guests at William's other birthday party given by his grandmother, Mrs. Edward Grannis, on Friday were not picked on this basis. They were Darrel Jensen, Darrel and Howard T Grotter Jr., Robert and Richard Ramsey and Edmond Gooding, Jr. Games with prizes for all the guests were played and refreshments featured by a big birthday cake were served and William was brought birthday gifts. The party lasted from 3:30 to 5:30." ■

Local Historic Districts *continued from page 4*

to homeowners in distinctly separate Local Historic Districts.

Granted, much footwork would have to be done to establish these new Local Historic Districts, but much footwork has already been

done. Graduate students at Eastern Michigan University's Historic Preservation Program documented and photographed much of Normal Park and College Heights in the mid 1990s. These documents have been preserved and are available to the public here in the Ypsilanti Archives, waiting to be compiled into a report that would advocate for the creation of a Normal Park Historic District and a College Heights Historic District.

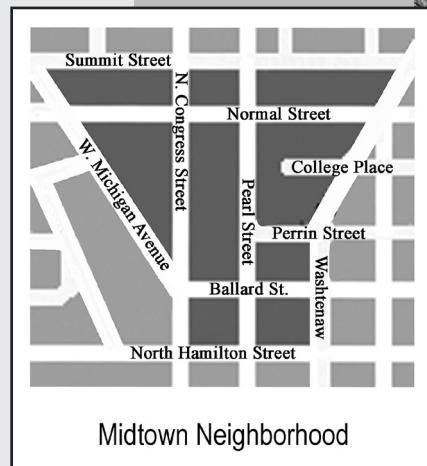
Below are small overviews of each of the four neighborhoods that would make ideal Local Historic Districts. Each overview contains a map of the neighborhood boundaries along with an example of the different house types encountered in each neighborhood. ■

(Michael Newberry is a graduate student in the graduate program in Historical Preservation at Eastern Michigan University. He just completed an Internship in the YHS Museum.)

Midtown Neighborhood:

Nestled south of Eastern Michigan University and west of downtown Ypsilanti, Midtown Neighborhood is the oldest of the four neighborhoods that could be proposed as a Local Historic District, and it is largely composed of homes from the Victorian period. The Midtown Neighborhood Association is bounded on the South side by West Michigan Avenue, on the East side by North Hamilton Street, on the North side by Washtenaw Street, and on the West side by Summit Street.

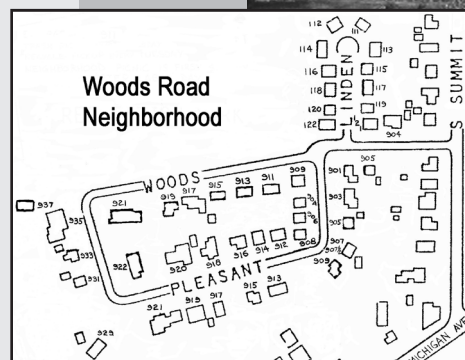
Left: The Midtown Neighborhood is south of Eastern Michigan University and west of downtown Ypsilanti. Right: The Midtown Neighborhood is composed mostly of homes from the Victorian period.



Woods Road Neighborhood:

Woods Road Neighborhood is comprised of 46 houses located on Linden Court, a cul-de-sac directly south of Recreation Park, and the rectangular diverticulum of Woods Road and Pleasant Drive. The majority of the houses in this neighborhood are wood frame structures from the 1930s. There are also masonry and stone houses in various revival styles to include one English Medieval Revival designed by Ralph S. Gerganoff. Linden Court is comprised almost entirely by wood framed English Tudor Revival homes.

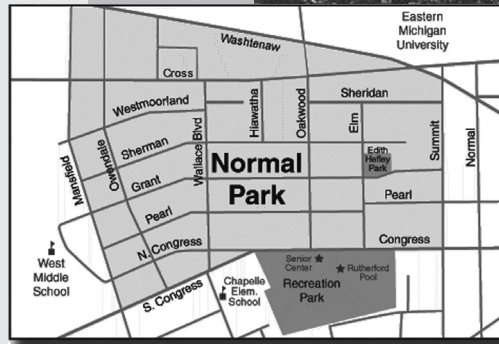
Left: The majority of the houses in the Woods Road Neighborhood are wood frame structures from the 1930s. Right: There are masonry and stone houses in the Woods Road Neighborhood in various revival styles including this English Medieval Revival designed by Ralph S. Gerganoff.



Normal Park Neighborhood:

Approximately 700 houses comprise the Normal Park Neighborhood Association. Known for its 1920s and 1930s Colonial Revival homes, various kit homes, Bungalows, Craftsman, and English Tudor Revival homes, Normal Park is a unified community with many excellent examples of highly maintained historic homes. The neighborhood is bounded on the South side by Congress Street, on the East side by the west side of Summit Street, on the North side by the south side of Washtenaw Avenue, and on the West side by Mansfield Street.

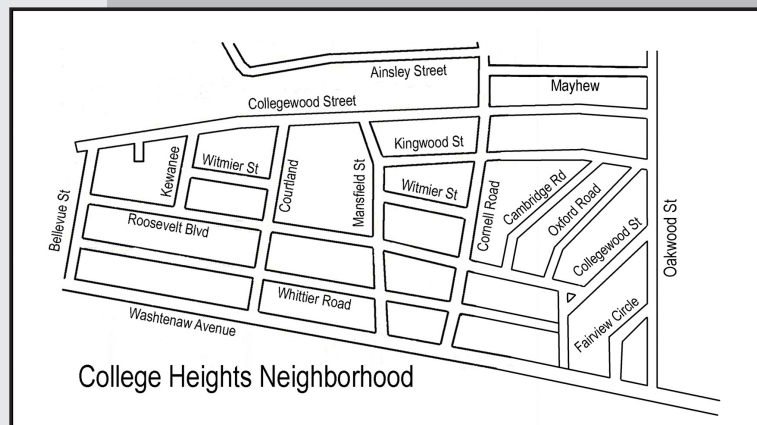
Left: The Normal Park Neighborhood is known for 1920s and 1930s Colonial Revival homes, various kit homes, Bungalows, Craftsman, and English Tudor Revival homes. Right: This home at 311 North Wallace Boulevard was built in 1921.



College Heights Neighborhood:

The newest of the four neighborhoods that should be proposed as a Local Historic District, College Heights is known for its post-war ranch style homes and English Tudor Revivals. This neighborhood was among the first in Ypsilanti to abandon the grid system in favor of the non-linear neighborhood street layout reminiscent of 1950s suburbia. College Heights is bound on the South side by the north side of Washtenaw Avenue, the East side by Oakwood Street, the North side by Ainsley Street, and the West side by Bellevue Street. The proposed Local Historic District boundaries for College Heights might be bounded as it existed in 1952: on the South side by the north side of Washtenaw Avenue, the West side by Cornell Road, the North side by Collegewood Drive, and the West side by the east side of Oakwood Avenue.

Left: The College Heights Neighborhood is known for its post-war ranch style homes and English Tudor Revivals. Right: This home at 703 Cambridge Street was built in 1952.



Sarah Santure Went Missing

By James Mann

A missing child is cause for concern and fear for the child's well being. This was the case in April of 1936, when Sarah Santure left her home and seemed to disappear.

Sarah Santure, who was then 13 years of age, left her home at 2626 East Michigan Avenue on Tuesday, April 21, 1936 after an argument with an older sister. The family thought she left to visit relatives in Detroit, but began to worry when she failed to arrive.

"We are heart broken," said her mother Gertrude Curtis. "When Sarah packed a dress and other belongings in a bad mood Tuesday and started away, we thought she was joking. Now we are greatly alarmed for her safety and hope for her early return."

She had made threats in the past to run away and sometimes would say to her mother, "What would you do if I went off and never came back?" Once, when the family still lived in Belleville she had left for a few hours. The family had reason to believe Sarah was playing a joke on this day, as this was the birthday of her favorite stepbrother, Clayton Curtis. The birthday cake was ready for dinner that night.

"There are nine in the Curtis family and the income is inadequate to dress the children well and furnish the schoolbooks needed. They came from Belleville last November and of late the stepfather, Hammond Curtis has worked in an Ypsilanti factory and Mrs. Curtis in one in Ann Arbor. Sarah has a sister Phyllis two years older than herself and a younger brother. The other four children are her stepbrothers and sisters. Phyllis takes care of them all day while the parents are at work," reported *The Ypsilanti Daily Press* of Friday, April 24, 1936.

"Although there is the usual teasing and joking natural to a large family," continued the account, "and something of the kind was indulged in Tuesday, it is not ill natured, and the neighbors speak with commendation of the kindness that obtains in the family. The

parents do not punish the children, and there is a lack of quarreling or disputing among them."

"When Sarah left her home Tuesday," the account continued, "she was carrying a dress and a manicure set in a bag. The family of children were watching her and called out to her to come back, and her brother says she was thumbing her way. A car stopped and took her in."

Sarah's acceptance of the ride must have come as a surprise to the family, as she was described by neighbors as so shy she would never accept rides and so timid with strangers she was reluctant to be at home alone.

Sarah was described as five feet, three inches tall, weighing between 125 and 130 pounds, and dressed in a red coat with black fur trimming, wearing a yellow and brown plaid dress. She was said to have been an unusually attractive child with a clear white complexion, golden brown curly hair worn in a long bob and having striking blue-grey eyes with long lashes. Sarah also had two slightly protruding teeth which was noticeable only on close scrutiny.

On Friday May 1, 1936 *The Ypsilanti Daily Press* reported that Sarah had been seen near Ypsilanti the previous Tuesday, at a gasoline station operated by George R. Wood on East Michigan Avenue, seven miles east of Ypsilanti.

"The girl was identified through a picture appearing in Thursday night's Ypsilanti Press, by Mrs. George Wood, who stated the girl stopped and asked for work. She was wearing a black velvet tam, red coat and blue shift, had brown hair and blue eyes, and was carrying a paper bag containing a dress. This partially answers the description issued when the girl first disappeared."

Another report placed Sarah with a group of transient peddlers who had been operating a rug selling racket in the vicinity for several weeks. Sarah returned home on Tuesday, May 5, 1936, safe and sound. "The girl said she had obtained employment in the home of a Detroit patrolman," reported *The Ypsilanti Daily Press* of the same day, "and her identity was not discovered until he read her description in a newspaper. On questioning, Sarah said, she admitted her identity and he arranged transportation to her home here." ■

(James Mann is a local historian and author, a volunteer in the YHS Archives, and a regular contributor to the *Gleanings*.)



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Sister Mary Theodosia (Mug) – Touched by a Miracle

By George Ridenour

Mary Helen Mug was born in Indiana on July 16, 1860. She answered the call to become a nun by joining the Sisters of Providence on January 5, 1878. She made her first vows in 1881. As a teacher she was expected to take several positions over a ten year period to learn and teach.

Sister Mary Theodosia (Mug) taught in Ypsilanti, Michigan; Indiana; Illinois; Missouri and Massachusetts. I was able to verify through three sources that she did teach in Ypsilanti. She lived with the other nuns in a small cottage. The school was described as a two story building, containing four rooms and well furnished. Fr. William de Bever requested the Sisters of Providence in Indiana to staff a school and convent in Ypsilanti which opened in August of 1883. The school began with 100 girl pupils (boys were not allowed per the diocese) and was active until 1896. A change of pastors and a prevailing idea that public schooling for both boys and girls was best, caused the school to close.

Sister is described in her biographical sketch as: *"Sister was slight in build, medium height, and of delicate constitution. She wore spectacles with a pronounced degree of magnification. She had a remarkable ability in expression, both in musical composition and in literary work."* (Biographical sketch, Sisters of Providence, St. Mary of the Woods, April, 2011).

She, as well, wrote a noted biography of the life and works of Sister Mary Theodore Guerin which was published in 1904 (and is still available). The Vatican assigned her to gather all the information about the life and virtues of the foundress for the Vatican. Sister Mary Theodore was (after 95 years) beautified by Pope John Paul II in October, 1998. She was canonized and declared by Pope Benedict XVI a "saint" on October 15, 2006; America's eighth saint.

Little did Sister Mary Theodosia know that she was destined by God to be the FIRST

MIRACLE leading to the beatification of St. Mary Theodore Guerin. (First intercession: sister of Providence.org. Internet, April, 2011)

"...She suffered from neuritis in her right hand and arm. Later she developed an abdominal tumor. The pain from the disease persisted. She wrote the manuscript with the paper resting on her at knee height... her health took a turn for the worst in 1906 when she discovered a lump in her left breast. Diagnosis indicated it was malignant and her physician in Terre Haute recommended an immediate mastectomy. The nerves and muscles in the left arm became rigid. The abdominal tumor continued to grow such that she could not kneel and she had difficulty walking."

All during these years of trials and declining health she remained true to her assignment of writing and producing documentation for the Vatican on the life of Mother Guerin.

AND THEN: *"On the evening of October 30, 1908 Sister Mary Theodosia paused to pray at the tomb of Mother Theodore. She prayed not for herself, but for Sister Joseph Therese O'Connell who was very ill with Rheumatoid Arthritis. While she stood there praying she said to herself, 'I wonder if she (Mother Theodore) has any power with Almighty god?'" "Instantly, I heard in my soul the words, 'YES, SHE HAS.'" (startled) "Well if she has, I wish she would show it."*

"She retired to bed in the early morning hours after spending most of the night proof reading and writing. She arose three hours later feeling strong and rested (for the first time in years). She started making her bed and realized that she was using BOTH hands and arms. Her fingers were strong and quick. The tumor at her waist had disappeared. Her eyesight, which had been poor, was corrected. Most noticeable was the fact that she was able to eat anything without digestion problems." She had many examinations at several medical facilities



Sister Mary Theodosia, who played a significant role in making the case for canonization of Sister Mary Theodore Guerin, taught in Ypsilanti in the late 1800s.

and NO malignance was EVER FOUND AGAIN. She lived to 82.

As a result of her recovery, after testimonies from those who knew her and exhaustive medical examinations, her healing was declared by the Vatican a "miracle." A miracle through the intercession of Sister Mary Theodore Guerin. This first miracle was used as part of the granting of beautification by Pope John Paul II in October, 1998.

Sister Mary Theodosia (Mug), who passed through Ypsilanti, was touched by a miracle.

Resources included information from the Sisters of Providence, The Story of St. John the Baptist Church of Ypsilanti, and the Third Miracle by Bill Briggs. ■

(George Ridenour is a member of the YHS Archives Advisory Board, a volunteer in the Archives, and a regular contributor to the Gleanings.)

Community Groups Focused on History

By Jane Schmiedeke

Ypsilanti has always been a town strongly interested in its history. It's not surprising, then, that there are several history-related organizations functioning in the community.

Three separate community groups are associated with the history of Ypsilanti: the Ypsilanti Historical Society, the Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation, and the Ypsilanti Historic District Commission. Perhaps the following will help clear up the confusion which often exists about the nature of these groups and what role each plays in our community.

- The Ypsilanti Historical Society is a membership organization, open to all interested persons. The Society's focus is on Ypsilanti history in terms of people and events. Founded in 1965, the Historical Society operates the Historical



The Ypsilanti Historical Society owns and operates the Museum and Archives located at 220 North Huron Street.

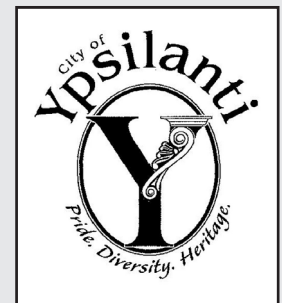
Museum and Archives and gathers facts and artifacts related to Ypsilanti history. Ypsilanti was fortunate, for some time, to have had a City Historian. In the 1950s, Ypsilanti City Council created the position of City Historian, a position which was filled first by Louis White, then by Foster Fletcher, then by Doris Milliman, and then by James Mann. The City Historian had the duty to collect and preserve items of historical interest to the Ypsilanti area. The Historical Museum collections were first housed in the old Quirk mansion at 206 North Huron, later moved to the basement of the building on Michigan Avenue which is now the downtown branch of the Ypsilanti District Library and, in 1970, moved into the City-owned historic house at 220 North Huron Street. In 2006, the Historical Society bought the building from the City. The Archives, located in the lower level of the Museum, is an extremely valuable resource, containing pictures and information on significant persons, buildings, and events in Ypsilanti history. The Ypsilanti Historical Society publishes a quarterly publication called the Gleanings. For more information, visit the Museum and Archives at 220 North Huron or call 482-4990.

- The Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation is also a membership organization, open to all interested persons. Its focus is on Ypsilanti history in terms of buildings - in other words, historic preservation. The Foundation was formed in 1974 to encourage the preservation of historic structures in Ypsilanti by educating the community to the beauty and continued use of Ypsilanti's rich variety of such buildings. The Foundation is responsible for the "Historic Structure" markers on many of our buildings and for bi-monthly educational programs concerning historic preservation. The Foundation's major fund raiser is the annual Historic Home Tour, held during Heritage Festival each August.



The Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation is responsible for the "Historic Structure" markers and for bi-monthly educational programs concerning historical preservation.

- The Historic District Commission is a City administrative agency created by City Council in 1978 to administer the Historic District Ordinance. The Commission is composed of seven members, appointed by the Mayor with the concurrence of City Council. The Commission meets twice a month to review all applications for building permits in the Historic District for work which will have an exterior effect. No work can begin until it has been approved by the Commission. All Commission members must be residents of Ypsilanti. The majority of them have their own homes in the Historic District.



The Historic District Commission is responsible for the administration of the Historic District Ordinance. The Commission meets twice a month to review applications for building permits in the Historic District.

Each of these history-related organizations makes unique and significant contributions to the preservation of Ypsilanti history. Together, their work assures that our past will always be part of our future. ■

(Jane Schmiedeke wrote the historic district ordinance for the City of Ypsilanti that led to the establishment of the Historic District in 1978. She currently serves as the chair of the Historic District Commission and is on the Advisory Board for the YHS Archives. In 1974 she was the co-founder of the Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation.)

Yard Sale Saga

By Bill Nickels

Shortly after the 2010 Historical Society yard sale, Al Rudisill received a call from Maxe Obermeyer saying that a property he listed had some furniture and small items available for our Historical Museum 2011 Yard Sale. Collecting began by picking up a very nice early American china cabinet, a nice upholstered love seat, and many small items. Al and I moved the collection to the Starkweather House for storage. Ron Rupert inexpensively rents the interior of the house for our use as he restores the exterior. The collection for 2011 continued with donations from many members and friends which eventually filled two rooms in the Starkweather House.

As the June 4, 2011 date for the sale approached, donated items filled the Nickels and Rudisill garages.

As we watched the weather forecast for the first week in June, dry pleasant weather was predicted. The forecast held true on Wednesday and Thursday as Midge Fahndrich, Virginia Davis, Ward Freeman, Kathryn Howard, Hal Rex, Linda Rex, Diane Schick, Diane's sister Karen Schroder, Diane's nephew Benjamin Schroder, John Pappas, Fofie Papas, Nancy Wheeler, Rita Sprague, Lauren Carpenter, Al Rudisill, Diane Reppke, Jack Livisay, Maria Davis, Fred Davis, Karen Nickels, Katie Begole, Juanita Goff, Shirley Lambert, and Marcia Peters worked feverishly pricing and marking items. Friday was also a nice day as most of the same crowd set up tables, filled tables, and moved donated items from the Starkweather House.

Township Treasurer Larry Doe graciously donated his tent for the sale which he set up Friday morning. The tent protected the donated dining room furniture, book cases, couch, chairs, rugs, etc from the weather overnight.

As the volunteers busily set up for Saturday, \$1,000 worth of merchandise was sold on Friday.

The weather forecast for Friday night and Saturday changed to possible thunderstorms, some severe. After a nervous Friday night, the morning news said the possible thunderstorms went north and missed us and we were clear until possibly Saturday afternoon.

We were greeted with beautiful weather on Saturday and a rusty old outside table was the first item that sold at 7:00 a.m. (officially the sale opened at 9:00 a.m.)! Most of the volunteers from earlier in the week helped shoppers make purchases as the weather got warmer and warmer.

In order to clear the tables, a half price sale started at 2:00 p.m. followed by a \$2 a box sale at 3:00 p.m. Simultaneously, volunteers filled 12 cardboard boxes with household items to be given to the Center for Independent Living. At the close of the sale, volunteers cleared the tables and filled another twelve cardboard boxes with merchandise for the Thrift Shop to sell. Another eight boxes were filled with left over books for the Ypsilanti District Library's annual book sale. The upholstered couch mentioned above never sold and was given to an EMU student for her apartment. The china cabinet was sold to a young couple thrilled with their purchase.

Predicted thunderstorms never materialized and, by 6:00 p.m., the tables were down, the driveway was cleared, and the merchandise not given to nonprofits was on the curb. Diane Reppke, Hal Rex, Linda Rex, Fred Davis, Lauren Carpenter, and Diane Schick gathered in the dining room to count the take. A new record of \$3,582.89 was set this year!

By Sunday afternoon, most of the curbed merchandise disappeared as many "curbside recyclers" stopped by.

The Yard Sale has always been thought of as a good fund raiser, an opportunity for members to actively participate as donors or workers, and a good way to delay having merchandise going to land fills. We learned of an additional reason this year. A neighbor mentioned that one of their friends from Ann Arbor said "I had so much fun I would like to move to Ypsilanti!" ■

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George Hammond and the Simmocolon Stock Farm

By James Mann

South of the city of Ypsilanti, on Whittaker Road, where the Kroger Store is now located, was once the site of one of the noted farms of the area. This was the site of the Simmocolon Stock Farm, owned by George Hammond. It is a sad tale of wealth; misplaced ambition, and perhaps personal reform.

George H. Hammond inherited a fortune from his father, also named George Hammond, who had made his money in the

or three hundred of money apiece. The wish boys among the Washtenaw farmers wouldn't give \$1,000 for the Shropshires, with the rams and ewes thrown in, and there consequently wasn't much sale for the high-priced stock."

Unable to sell the sheep at a profit, he sold them at a loss, and then turned his attention to horses. Now he dreamed of having the finest horse breeding and training establishment to be found. Hammond spent the money to

at the business," continued the account, "and upon this smooth course the colt trotters in the Lexington of Michigan receive the instruction and training which will make them winners on the great work-day turf."

"The box stalls," noted *The Washtenaw Times*, "were finished in Georgia pine and quartered oak, with wrought iron fittings fine enough for a banking office. The whole outfit was horseman's dream." The account noted he had built a house, "half as big as Belle Isle park casino."

Hammond bred and trained horses, but his opinion of the value of the horses was not shared by those who might have purchased some, and so the horses stayed on the farm. George liked to gamble as well as breed and train horses, and his betting took its toll on his resources. By 1900 he could no longer afford the farm.

"The mile track is weed grown. The electric light plant is eating itself away in rust. The big house is occupied by Mrs. Hammond, who is doing her best to make the balance of the horses pay the pressing debts. The covered track is falling into decay, as any wooden building a quarter of a mile long will fall into decay."

On the 27th of October, 1900, the last of the horses and farm implements were sold. His wife Bella divorced George in 1902 on the grounds of extreme cruelty. She claimed two years before he had threatened to kill her," and according to *The Ypsilantian* of September 25, 1932, "and did attempt to strangle her, being prevented by her mother."

On November 1, 1902, George Hammond opened a butcher shop at 840 Third Avenue in Detroit. When a caller stopped by his shop he stepped forward to greet the caller, clad in the conventional white apron of the butcher. "This is my business," said Hammond, to *The Detroit Journal* in a story republished by *The Ypsilanti Sentinel - Commercial* of Thursday, December 18, 1902. "No one else has anything to say about it, nor are they concerned in it. I'm getting along very nicely, but if you want to learn anything about me you'll have to go elsewhere." ■

(James Mann is a local historian and author, a volunteer in the YHS Archives, and a regular contributor to the *Gleanings*.)

"The box stalls," noted *The Washtenaw Times*, "were finished in Georgia pine and quartered oak, with wrought iron fittings fine enough for a banking office. The whole outfit was horseman's dream."

meat packing business in Detroit. Sometime, perhaps in the early 1880's, the son purchased the Pierce place south of Ypsilanti, a fine farm of some 200 acres.

He was a likely young fellow when he started the farm, noted *The Washtenaw Times* of Wednesday, October 17, 1900. "He was highstrung and headstrong, and he astonished the local agricultural gentry by his evidences of wealth. He paid a pretty penny for the Pierce place, which was a mighty likely farm with good buildings and a living creek running clear through it, and he proceeded at once to show the neighbors what a real-up-to-date farmer could do. He stocked the farm with sheep at the outset. Anyone who attended the Detroit exposition in the late 1880's cannot fail to remember the fine round Shropshires that used to occupy the sheep pens under the name of the Hammond farm. He paid as high as \$1,000 for Shropshire rams, and they say his ewes of the same breed ran into two

make his dream real. *The Ypsilanti Commercial* of Friday, January 3, 1893, reprinted a description of the farm, from *Michigan Horse News*. "The place consists of 250 rolling acres through which courses a stream of fresh water, so that every field in the low lands has water in it for the grazing stock and the great steam pump furnishes the high lands and stables with the best quality of water. There are three stables which contain 65 stalls 10 x 14 feet in dimension. The first barn is 45 x 240 feet and contains 40 stalls; the second is 24 x 209 feet and contains 16 stalls; and the third is 40 x 40 feet and contains nine stalls. Besides the above there are other barns for farm horses, implements, grain and hay. All the barns are heated by steam, and there is an electric light plant on the place which furnishes the modern incandescence to every nook and corner of the Simmocolon farm."

"A perfect regulation mile track has been constructed by Mr. Blinn, of Chicago, a veteran

Ypsilanti History - It's a Test!

By Peter Fletcher

1. Complete the political phrase "Good things come in torrents..." which was used in a 1963 local election.
2. Identify the prominent 1983 graduate of Eastern Michigan University who went on to become the personal aide to George H. W. Bush.
3. What glitch developed when the First United Methodist Church wanted to celebrate the 75th wedding anniversary of Mr. and Mrs. Courtland Snidecor?
4. Name the prominent Ann Arbor real estate investor and Athletic Director Emeritus of the University of Michigan who still brags about the fact that his first successful real estate venture took place in Ypsilanti.
5. Where are the State of Michigan Historic Markers located in Ypsilanti?
6. Why was Ypsilanti the site of an early Michigan State Police post?
7. Who was the owner of the grand old house located at 203 South Huron Street, current site of the Gilbert Residence?
8. Name the Ypsilanti native who worked for the Michigan Central Railroad, then for Dr. Gerald Spears, then the Credit Bureau of Ypsilanti, retired at age 85, and lived to be 100 years old.
9. Because Ypsilanti no longer has an effective voice on the Michigan State Transportation Commission what errors are on the current State Highway map?
10. Why does Governor Rick Snyder have more than average knowledge on the wonders of Ypsilanti?
11. What names were considered for our community prior to selecting "Ypsilanti?"
12. Many early country farm mailing addresses had an "R.R." number. Explain.
13. Why can anyone who had Frances Lister for High School French sing along as "The Marseillaise" is performed during the classic movie "Casablanca?"
14. Carrie Chadwick had a retail store at 402 East Michigan Avenue. What did she buy and sell?
15. Who was the local author of "We Never Called Him Henry" and which Henry was the subject?
16. What local businesses were nicknamed "The Ypsi Gyp," "The Pill Pusher," and "The Whittling Works?"
17. What did the Masonic Temple, the Ypsilanti Press, the First Baptist Church and the Dixie Shop have in common?
18. What political trick was played on local Democrats when they showed up to dedicate the new post office at 106 South Adams Street?
19. How many verses do you remember of the old comedy song enjoyed by Ypsi High students to the tune of "My Darling Clementine?"
20. Explain the Ypsilanti connection to the cowardly lion in the "Wizard of Oz" movie.

(Peter Fletcher is the President of the Credit Bureau of Ypsilanti and is widely known for his inspirational speeches.)

Turn to page 25 of this issue to check your answers.

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A Picnic in the Park: a Snapshot of Ypsilanti Family Life in the 1950s

By Peg Porter

On a summer afternoon in July, 1956, a group of friends gathered at Recreation Park for a picnic. The adults were members of a "supper club" that met at least monthly in one of the group's homes for a potluck meal followed by bridge. One couple and their children, the Shepherds, were leaving Ypsilanti for Minneapolis where Jack Shepherd would begin working for Newhouse Paper. The picnic was a send-off for these long-time friends. That the children were included in this gathering indicates the depth of these friendships. This was family life in Ypsilanti in the 1950's as many of us knew it.

Most of the men had known each other for much of their lives. Ypsi Boys, they had grown up in town and married young women who attended Michigan State Normal College. Among this particular group, were Thora Budd from Irons, Michigan; Barb Shepherd from Greenville, Michigan and Ruth Porter from Hillsdale County. Many, many marriages resulted from these relationships, particularly in the 1920s, 1930s and into the 1940s. Typically the couples married shortly after the women graduated, although sometimes before. The women settled into homemaking and raising children delaying their entry into the workforce for a decade or more.

Building or buying a house soon followed. Most of these families lived on the west side of town. Their homes reflected what was popular at that time: colonial, Dutch Colonial and Cape Cod. The houses usually had three to four bedrooms and one bathroom, the latter totally unacceptable in today's real estate market. However, in the 1950s they and their homes were solidly middleclass.

All of the men worked in business and all of their jobs were in Ypsilanti. Jack Shepherd's move from the Peninsular Paper Company to a Minneapolis firm was a signal of changes to come. Jim Mohler, who had worked for Scovill Lumber Company, took a position

with Fingerle Lumber. The family purchased a home in Ann Arbor. The Eckerts moved from Ypsilanti to Hillsdale. In the 1950s, families became more mobile and relocation more common.

"Father Knows Best" was a popular television program in the 1950s. Jim Anderson, played by Robert Young, put on a suit and tie every day and headed to his job as an insurance agent, while his wife Margaret played by Jane Wyatt, put on a dress, stayed at home to manage the household. Margaret's way of dress was no exaggeration. Note that each of the women in the group photograph is wearing a dress even though the occasion is a picnic. Their hair is styled short, as was

Jane Wyatt's. The TV Andersons are nicely reflected in this group including the number of children. There were three Anderson children; in the Ypsilanti group, four of the families have three children, while two couples have two children. In summary, the Anderson family depicted family life in the 1950s as it was played out in "real life."

The following decade, the 1960s, was a time of change and upheaval. The second generation of the Ypsilanti group went to college but then the similarities with their parents' generation began to shift. The girls began careers, two in teaching, but also in business and public service. Marriage was sometimes postponed and three of the girls never had children. The boy's lives did not deviate that much from their fathers although a number of them moved away from business into engineering, education and the military.

But that was all in the future. On this particular summer afternoon there was corn on the cob simmering in the pot, and hot dogs and hamburgers on the grill. The women



(left to right) Jim and Ruth Mohler, children Margie, David and Jimmy; Lou and Louella Ables; Don and Ruth Porter, children Margaret (Peggy), Janie and Don Jr.; Clyde and Thora Budd, children Jim (behind his mother), Pat and Karen; Jack and Barb Shepherd, children Pam (in front of mother), John and Fred; Dick and Janet Smith, children Dick Jr. (in front of parents), and Mary; and Dick and Dorothy Eckert, children Julie and Rick. Photograph by Bob Southgate (Senior).

busied themselves with the food, while the men chatted and told jokes. The younger kids played in the park, while the teenagers "hung around." It was a family picnic, a gathering of old friends. ■

A personal note: the 12 months leading up to the picnic were difficult for me. In August, 1955, I had polio and spent nearly three months in the University of Michigan Hospital. Polio epidemics in the 1940s and 1950s left many children and young adults paralyzed.

Fortunately successful vaccines were developed by Drs. Salk and Sabin in the 1950s, an important medical breakthrough. For those of us who were stricken before the vaccines became readily available, life presented many challenges. Less than two months before this picture was taken, I had fallen and broke my left collarbone. Ironically the accident occurred in Recreation Park.

(Peg Porter is the Assistant Editor and a regular contributor to the Gleanings.)

Museum Advisory Board Report

*By Kathryn Howard, Chair -
Museum Advisory Board*



Many things have happened this spring and now we have a full schedule of activities and displays for the summer months. Our Art Exhibit was a wonderful success in spite of the inclement spring weather. We had twenty-four artists and one hundred paintings and photography. Paintings were in water, oil, pastels and acrylics. We have made the decision to schedule the Art Exhibit again for three weeks in 2012.

The Native American display case has been completely re-done by Derek and Michael, our Interns from the graduate program in Historical Preservation at Eastern Michigan University. Derek and Michael have graduated and have been replaced with two new Interns. The display of artifacts gathered by Mr. Jacob Thumm is very interesting and worth a visit to the Museum.

We had many school tours before school was out for the summer recess. Student Academic Affairs and College of LSA from the U of M, who come every year, were here. A very interesting group as they take such an interest in the furnishings and museum building itself.

The Lost Ypsilanti 1860 Civil War Exhibit started June 1 and goes to September. You must see it! Visual displays as well as Historical facts are here for you. Also, a Civil War Soldier is on display. It is a wonderful display for the whole family. Also, you might recognize someone mentioned as a war veteran.

Was a descendant from your family in the Civil War?

We are also always a part of the Ypsilanti Heritage Festival and will be open all three days of the Festival. We really need extra docents so please see if you can find two hours or so to help. It is really fun. Our schedule for the Heritage Festival is: Friday August 19, 2-6 p.m.; Saturday August 20, after parade to 6 p.m.; and, August 21, Sunday Noon - 4 p.m. Call Nancy Wheeler at 734-483-7749 if you can serve as a docent during those times.

The Quilt Exhibit starts September 25th and will go to October 9th. There are always beautiful quilts and craftsmanship to see. If you would like to exhibit one or more quilts, please call Rita Sprague at 734-483-3600 or Kathleen J. Campbell at 734-483-5693 or email Kathleen at: kjcampbelllace@sbcglobal.net.

The new Intern in the Museum from EMU is Lauren Carpenter. Welcome Lauren! Have a wonderful summer. ■

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The Ypsilanti Train Flower Girls - Can Their Spirit Move Us Again? *continued from page 5*

As things turned out, the envisioned improvements to the train station area were completed in only two years, bringing spectacular change and transforming the impression of Ypsilanti gained by those who looked out from windows of passing trains. The imagination and work it had taken to relocate the stockyards and oil tanks and replace them with gardens paid off in a greatly enhanced city image. In fact, both the train station gardens, and other gardens around the city, were not only a constant source of delight for Ypsilanti residents, but so beautiful that people actually came from outside the city to experience them. In a newspaper article from 1892, we read about one such garden: "The garden is now in its glory and the brightest beauty spot between Sandy Hook and the Golden Horn — between Portland on the east and Portland on the west. . . . It has undoubtedly done more to spread the fame and brighten the name of Ypsilanti in the minds of people who know us not, than any other institution here."

Maintenance of the gardens and grounds was entrusted to a genius with plants, John Laidlaw, a native of Scotland who had been an experienced gardener for 24 years. Laidlaw was hired officially as "Superintendent of Landscape Gardening, for the Michigan Central Rail Road." He was responsible not

"...the Michigan Central gardens at Ypsilanti will again become the eagerly watched for spot on the Detroit and Chicago line of the road."

only for planning, planting and supervising the gardens at the Ypsilanti railroad yards, but at yards all along the rail line and at other stations as well.

In a newspaper article from July 27, 1899, there is speculation about the theme of the

Ypsilanti gardens for that year. "There has been much query as to what was to be the great feature of the Michigan Central depot garden this year," we read. "Owing to the fact that twenty-seven other depot gardens are supplied from the Central's greenhouse at Ypsilanti under Mr. Laidlaw's direction, the work here has been somewhat delayed. This year Lansing, Bay City, and Mackinac have been added to the list of towns supplied from here. But from the present activity at the gardens, it is evident that Mr. Laidlaw is again surpassing all his previous achievements and that the Michigan Central gardens at Ypsilanti will again become the eagerly watched for spot on the Detroit and Chicago line of the road."

The gardens for the year 1897 were described in an article from the weekly newspaper *The Ypsilantian*: "Lovers of the beautiful should not delay to visit the Michigan Central depot garden which is now at its loveliest. South of the baggage room is a beautiful specimen of carpet bedding, geometrical designs worked out in different colored coleus and achyranthes, with alyssum for contrast. This however, is but an earnest of the beauty to be



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found north of the passenger station. Here the velvety green of the lawn forms a perfect setting for the handsome display of foliage and flower. The paths are outlined by graceful sweeps of foliage plants and alyssum. The eye is first caught by the beautiful bed devoted to the emblems of the Mystic Shriners. The bed slopes gently backward and the figures stand out with great distinctness.... A little further on is the famous Liberty Bell, flanked by cannon and crossed muskets. This is the design which seems to strike a responsive chord in the heart of every traveler, if one may judge from the enthusiastic remarks overheard on trains. The bell itself is seven feet across the mouth and 6 feet 9 inches in length. This design contains 17,000 plants.... At the right near the water tank is Mr. Laidlaw's leading design for the season – the Log Cabin, the old fashioned well sweep and curb with the old bucket resting thereon, and on the other side of the cabin, the familiar soap-kettle with a fire made of achyranthes underneath.”

As if the magnificent flower gardens were not enough to make a positive impression on those from out of town, the station manager, Mr. Brazil M. Damon, had still another brilliant marketing ploy to convince railroad passengers that Ypsilanti was a pleasant and beautiful place to either visit or pass through. That ploy was the world-famous Ypsilanti Flower Girls -- who were tasked with distributing flowers to passengers on arriving New York Central trains.

One of the original Flower Girls was Jessie Swaine, who lived at the corner of East Forest and North River Street, just two blocks from the train station. She gives us more information about her duties in an oral history recorded in January, 1965, when she was in her eighties, and in a newspaper article from the 1920s.

According to Jessie Swaine, Mr. Damon's older daughter, Avonia, was responsible for purchasing the flowers, which she arranged into small bouquets containing three or four flowers each. Some of the flowers were grown in the greenhouse near the train station, and others were obtained from ladies in Ypsilanti for one cent a bunch.

Jessie Swaine and the station master's younger daughter, Lillian Damon, would be ready to distribute the flowers when New York Central

continued on page 20



Michigan Central depot gardens in 1891.



One of the featured plantings in the Michigan Central gardens was the Liberty Bell.



In 1899 the featured planting in the gardens was a log house.

The Ypsilanti Train Flower Girls - Can Their Spirit Move Us Again? *continued from page 19*

passenger trains stopped in Ypsilanti three or four times a day. To perform their task, the Flower Girls were excused from school an hour each morning. Miss Swaine explained: "I would start at one end of the train and Lillian Damon, the daughter of the yard-master, would start at the other end. We would get on three or four trains a day. The engineer would give us a special whistle to make sure we were off the train before it started again."

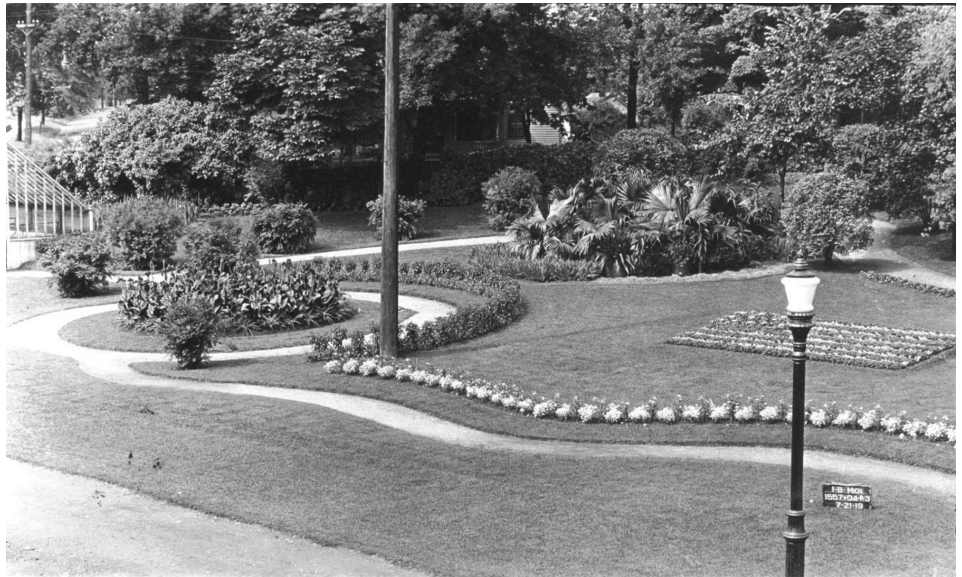
Miss Swaine told how the women passengers were impressed and delighted with this gesture. "Sometimes," she says, "even the men would ask us for flowers. They said that the bouquets looked so very pretty. And if we had enough extra bouquets, we would occasionally give some to the men." For their efforts, the Flower Girls were each paid 15 cents a day. Eventually, Jessie Swaine replaced the duties of Avonia, and was paid 75 cents a day for purchasing and arranging the flowers.

Nearly everyone in Ypsilanti has seen the picture of the Train Flower Girls in the station gardens. Miss Swaine describes the day that picture was taken -- in August, 1892. The two girls are wearing their Flower Girl uniforms, which Miss Swaine describes as dark blue, with white bands on the hem and sleeves, and sailor hats. Her father, Frederick Swaine, a maltster, is on the right, and Mr. Damon, the station master, on the left. Miss Swaine notes that her father just happened to be waiting for the train to Ann Arbor the day the photographer was there to take her and Lillian's photograph in the gardens. In the oral-history interview, she proudly relates that the story of the Ypsilanti gardens and the Train Flower Girls was even written about in the *London Times*. Her father had spent his youth in London, before immigrating to Ypsilanti in the early 1870's, so Ms. Swaine found the story in the *Times* a particular source of pride.

The magnificent flower gardens at the Ypsilanti train station seem to have disappeared as still another victim of the Great Depression. Today, they exist only in browning remnants of the printed word, in a few old



The Ypsilanti flower girls. At the left is the station master, Brazil Damon, in the center is Jessie Swaine (on the left) and Lillian Damon, and on the right is Fred Swaine.



A view of the depot gardens in 1919.

photographs, and perhaps in the memory of a few very old people.

Today, too, the pre-gardens blight of 120 years ago has returned in the form of the abandoned train station and crumbling Thompson Block that meet the eyes of train passengers who pass through our town on the Amtrak. We can only hope that, like the enlightened citizens and business people in the Ypsilanti of 1890, visionaries in our own day will find ways to make Ypsilanti a showcase of beauty and delight. Once more, the obvious starting point is the train station area, where both the boarded-up station and Thompson Block building cry

out for renovation and reintegration into the city's life. For those of us who live on North River Street, "hope springs eternal" that the flowers will bloom again. ■

(Janice Anschuetz lives with her husband in the Swaine House and spends time with her gardens and restoration. She loves history and stories about people in their time in history, and has a double major in history and sociology from Eastern Michigan University and a MSW in social work from The University of Michigan. She is currently researching and writing her third book - a history of one of her ancestors and their role in the shaping of England and America.)

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Civil War – Comrades in Arms

continued from page 3

born between 1834 and 1848. The Freeman children were born between 1830 and 1847. The Shier children were born between 1829 and 1845.

When the Freeman family moved to Ypsilanti Township in 1831, Michigan was still a Territory, the land was wilderness and early houses were constructed of logs. By the time the Crittenden and Shier families arrived in about 1842, Michigan was a state. Houses were mostly of frame construction. Still, the woods were full of wild game: large herds of deer, wild turkeys, all kinds of game, even bears. One could go out anytime and shoot a mess of squirrels or partridges. Hunting for meat was a way of early pioneer farm life.

In 1915-1916, Sheldon Crittenden wrote a series of articles that were published in the Ypsilanti Record newspaper about the early days of his youth. Other folks wrote comments about these articles and also wrote stories of their own experiences in early pioneer days. Some of these stories will be shared here.

On November 11, 1915, Sheldon wrote that the Crittenden school house, that he attended, stood on the hill (next to his farm home on the 1856 Ypsilanti Township map), and was a frame building. Church services were also held in the school house, but his family attended the Presbyterian Church in the town of Ypsilanti. Sheldon went on to mention some of his teacher's names. His first teacher was Lucinda Francis, among others were Helen Buck, Louise Waldron and Ms. Norton.

John Shier, the youngest son of his family, wrote a letter to his sister (in-law), Susan that was published in the Ypsilanti Record on December 9, 1915. It stated that Sheldon's stories "helped me remember quite a lot from the year 1845, when I moved to the old Shier homesteadat a time when Rawsonville was on the map, and (about) the old school-house on the hill where we learned to chew tamarack gum, slide down the hill and fight the Freeman boys and incidentally become "highly educated." The schoolhouse was the neighborhood place of meeting and the Crittenden well of water was where the busy students procured that necessary element. It

was considered a special mark of the school ma'am's favor if selected to "pass the water" to the always thirsty scholars." (The 1850 population census shows some children of these families attended school into their 19th year of age.) "Tell "Shell" to give another chapter or two. It brings back the good old days before the war."

By the late 1850's, economic rivalry existed between the industrial North and the agricultural South. The Northern state's economy was based upon industry and finance. The Southern states' economy was based upon producing tobacco, cotton, and sugar, much of which was grown on large plantations worked by slaves.

"Many Northerners believed the Union could win the war by defeating the Confederates in one battle. The Northern defeat at the first battle of Bull Run on July 21st proved this to be wrong."

On June 16, 1858, in Springfield, Illinois, upon accepting the Illinois Republican Party's nomination for state senator, Abraham Lincoln gave an acceptance speech. The most quoted phrases predicted coming events. "A house divided against itself cannot stand. I believe this government cannot endure, permanently, half slave and half free.....but I do expect it will cease to be divided. It will become one thing or the other." In 1860, the United States was composed of 19 free states and 15 slave states.

On November 6, 1860, Abraham Lincoln, anti-slave proponent, was elected the 16th president of the United States. On March 4, 1861, Lincoln was inaugurated in Washington, D. C. On December 20, 1860, South Carolina seceded from the Union, followed

over five weeks by six more Southern states.

At 4:30 a.m. of April 12, 1861, fifty Confederate cannons opened fire upon Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor. The Civil War had begun. On April 15, 1861, President Lincoln called for 75,000 military troops to suppress the insurrection. Two days later, Virginia and three more states seceded from the Union. This brought the total to eleven Southern states.

Many Northerners believed the Union could win the war by defeating the Confederates in one battle. The Northern defeat at the first battle of Bull Run on July 21st proved this to be wrong. The South won more battles and the North retreated back to Washington D. C.

On June 28, 1862, President Lincoln appealed for an additional 300,000 volunteers to quell the rebellion. Michigan had already sent 17 infantry regiments. The War Department asked for a quota of 6 more. Recruitment rallies, referred to as war meetings, were held throughout Michigan. One of these "Call to Arms" war meetings held on July 15th at Campus Martius in Detroit turned into a riot when a few Southern sympathizers, among the crowd, shouted down several speakers. To erase the embarrassment of this incident, Michigan's Governor Blair, encouraged by his patriotic wife, raised this quota from 6 to 7 more regiments. Thus began the recruitment of the 24th Michigan Infantry Regiment.

So it came to be that these four new enlistees of the 24th Michigan Regiment, Company F, Sheldon Crittenden, Levi Freeman, William and Frank Shier, all sons of pioneer Ypsilanti township farmers, all boyhood chums, were now destined to become comrades in arms.

Mustered into service on August 15, 1862, they learned basic military maneuvers at Camp Barns in Detroit. They left Campus Martius on August 29th, cheered on by a multitude of family and friends. The men of the 24th Michigan, Company F, left the Detroit dock aboard the boat "Cleveland", crossed Lake Erie, arrived in Cleveland, went by rail to Pittsburgh, then on toward Washington, D. C. All along the route, they were greeted by large patriotic crowds.

First, held in reserve to help protect Washington D. C., on Thursday, October 9, 1862, the 24th Michigan was formally admitted to the Army of the Potomac. They were assigned to the "Iron Brigade" of the First Army Corps which previously had included the tried and true "Black Hat" warriors of the 2nd, 6th, and 7th Wisconsin, and the 19th Indiana. By comparison, the 24th Michigan men were amateurs and were given a cool reception by the original regiments. The 24th Michigan received the honor of wearing the

the Battle of Gettysburg was the most famous of the above noted battles. It was the first decisive victory for the Union and a crushing defeat for the South. Commanded by Colonel Henry A. Morrow, the 24th Michigan, Iron Brigade was noted for suffering the most casualties of any Union regiment in the battle. On the first day of the battle, July 1, 1863, the 24th Michigan fought in close combat against the Confederate 26th North Carolina, who suffered the most casualties of any Confederate regiment.

Statistics - Battle of Gettysburg

	Union 24th Michigan	Confederate 26th N. Carolina
Entered battle with	496 men	800 men
Killed and wounded	310 men	588 men
Missing in action	81 men	120 men
Remaining	99 men	92 men
Percent killed & wounded	64%	73.5%
Percent loss	80%	88.5%

Hardee "Black Hat" after proving themselves worthy at the Battle of Fredericksburg on December 13, 1862.

From the time of their assignment into the Iron Brigade, the 24th Michigan Infantry men were engaged in the major Battles of Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, Gettysburg, Wilderness, Spotsylvania, Cold Harbor and the Siege of Petersburg.

Most of the military information in this article was documented from the book by Orson Blair Curtis, "History of the Twenty-Fourth Michigan of the Iron Brigade, Detroit, 1891." Mr. Curtis was a veteran of the Twenty-Fourth Michigan Regiment, Company D., who, prior to enlistment, had been a student at the University in Ann Arbor.

The following information was also gleaned from this book and the statistics were directly quoted. Based on the number of casualties,

"The two regiments faced each other down to death. These statistics (see chart: Statistics - Battle of Gettysburg) tell the pointed story of the terrible combat... Of the 24th Michigan only 99 men and 3 officers could be rallied to the flag on the second day of the battle, out of the 496 who had followed it into action that first morning."

The Battle of Gettysburg proved to be a turning point in the War. The South never recovered from their horrible loss of men and never again invaded the North. All of our four Ypsilanti men were statistics of the Battle of Gettysburg. Sheldon E. Crittenden was wounded and taken prisoner, but was released soon after and returned to his regiment. Levi S. Freeman was wounded in the body but was present in the next Battle of the Wilderness. Frank T. Shier was wounded twice. William R. Shier was wounded, captured and taken prisoner.

continued on page 24

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Civil War – Comrades in Arms

continued from page 23

As the Civil War progressed, after Gettysburg, our four men fought on, into more battles.

Private Sheldon E. Crittenden was again taken prisoner on June 22, 1864, after the Siege of Petersburg. He was captured on “Brook’s Expedition” a 32 man raiding team that had been sent out to destroy some enemy bridges. On January 20, 1916, Mr. S.E. Crittenden wrote in the Ypsilanti Record, “After the capture, we were marched through the country about 150 miles, then put on a freight car and taken to Wilmington, N. C. Here we were confined in a place which before the war had been used for auctioning slaves. After four weeks we were taken by train to Charleston and put in jail for about a month.” From there, Sheldon ended up at Andersonville prison. He was paroled in December 1864, then hospitalized for a few months to recover his health, after which he returned to his regiment on March 1, 1865. Sheldon was promoted to Sergeant on April 1, 1865.

Corporal Levi S. Freeman was taken prisoner at the Battle of Wilderness on May 5, 1864. Taken south, he was incarcerated at Andersonville prison, therein suffering unspeakable conditions. Levi spent some of this time at the Andersonville hospital, which was housed in a few tents next to the prison, where conditions were equally terrible. Exchanged on April 13, 1865, he was discharged as a paroled prisoner at Camp Chase, Ohio on June 8, 1865.

According to George D. Shier, author of “Henry T. Shier in the Civil War,” Private



This eagle banner appeared in the Friday morning edition of the Ypsilanti Commercial on April 14, 1865.

William R. Shier had been wounded at Gettysburg in the left hand, was captured July 1, 1863, taken prisoner to Richmond, and was paroled August 26, 1863. Returned to his regiment, he was later wounded at Spotsylvania in 1864 with a loss of part of his left index finger. William was promoted to Corporal on January 1, 1865.

Private Frank T. Shier’s obituary stated that he was wounded at Gettysburg and also narrowly escaped death when a Confederate bullet seamed his scalp in a battle other than Gettysburg. Frank was promoted to Corporal and then to Sergeant on dates unknown.

Sheldon wrote a detailed newspaper account on January 20, 1916 for the Ypsilanti Record of the horrible conditions that he experienced at Andersonville prison in Georgia. He described in detail the brutalities of the Confederate guards, the inner social controls

by fellow prisoners, the physical appearance of the prison grounds, the polluted drinking water, the small rationed quantities of partially cooked food filled with vermin, and worst of all the suffering of fellow prisoners from wounds, lack of medicine and medical care, dysentery and disease. In August and September (1864) about 300 men died every 24 hours.

On March 25, 1865, Confederate General Lee attacked Union General Grant’s army near Petersburg, Virginia, but was defeated. Lee attacked again on April 1st and lost. On April 2nd, Lee evacuated Richmond, Virginia, the Confederate capital. General Lee surrendered his Army of Northern Virginia on April 9, 1865, at the McLean house in the village of Appomattox Court House, effectively putting an end to the American Civil War.

On the evening of April 14, 1865, at Ford’s Theater in Washington D. C., President Abraham Lincoln was shot in the head by John Wilkes Booth. He died at 7:22 a.m. on April 15, 1865.

Sheldon E. Crittenden, William R. and Frank T. Shier were among the men of the 24th Michigan “Iron Brigade” regiment selected as escort at the funeral of the assassinated President Abraham Lincoln. Levi S. Freeman was not with the regiment due to imprisonment. The other three men were later mustered out on June 30, 1865 in Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan.

continued on page 26

Advertisement for Ypsilanti Food Co-op. The background is a stone wall. Text on the left: "Open 9 to 9", "312 N River St, Ypsi", "ypsifoodcoop.org", "734-483-1520". On the right is a logo with wheat stalks and the text "Ypsilanti Food Co-op". Below the logo is a list of items: "• Home baked breads", "• Wines & craft beers", "• Full line of natural, local groceries & produce".

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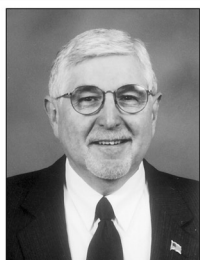
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Answers to *Ypsilanti History - It's a Test!*

Turn to page 15 of this issue for the questions to this test.

1. "...when you vote for J. Don Lawrence" who was running in 1963 as a Con-Con (Constitutional Convention) delegate.
2. Timothy J. McBride.
3. A letter of congratulations and best wishes requested from the President was delayed as they had never had a request for recognition of a 75th anniversary and they thought it must be an error. The truth was discovered in time and the letter arrived from President Bush with a day to spare.
4. William C. Martin.
5. First Methodist Episcopal Church, Ypsilanti Historical Museum, Ypsilanti Water Tower, Prospect Park, First Presbyterian Church, Library on Michigan (Elijah McCoy), and Michigan Avenue (Michigans Interurban).
6. Henry Ford had clout and got a State Police Post near each of his early plants.
7. The Gilbert Residence stands on the site of the Swift house, one of the grand homes of Ypsilanti. For many years it was the home of Helen Swift, and then her daughter Harriet. The Swift house was demolished to make room for the Gilbert Residence. What is not well known is the fact the Swift house was once a treatment center for alcoholics.
8. Ada E. Homes.
9. Michigan Avenue is mislabeled and Beyer Hospital is still shown as being open in Ypsilanti.
10. For eight years while on the Board of the Bank of Ann Arbor he heard fellow directors Richard Robb, Cynthia Wilbanks, and Peter Fletcher explain these wonders.
11. Palmyra and Waterville.
12. The R.R. stood for Rural Route.
13. She made her students memorize the French National Anthem.
14. Pianos.
15. Harry Bennett writing about his history with the original Henry Ford.
16. The Ypsilanti Press, Richardson Pharmacy and Michigan Ladder.
17. All burned down at separate times.
18. 10,000 pieces of mail were deposited the night before with big red letters saying "Romney for Governor." You can earn extra credit if you can name the trickster.
19. "In the school house on the corner, study students all the time, ancient history and dead Latin, Spanish, French not all in rhyme, or the students, oh the students, etc. etc.
20. Bert Lahr spent the summer here performing in the Greek Theater.

(Peter Fletcher is the President of the Credit Bureau of Ypsilanti and is widely known for his inspirational speeches.)

Civil War – Comrades in Arms *continued from page 24*

After the war, our four Ypsilanti veterans returned to their family farms in the township. They returned home. They were among the lucky ones.

On August 20, 1883, Sheldon Crittenden, age 43 years, in a General Affidavit in testimony for a pension for Levi Freeman stated that they were personally acquainted for 5 years and "I am personly (sic) acquainted with the aplicant (sic) Levi Freeman. We was boys together. Lived near him till 1871. I was in the same Regiment & same Company. Also in Andersonvill (sic) prison with him. I think it was in August or September he began to be lame in hips & legs. Soon after he was moved outside in hospital. I saw nothing more of him until after we was discharged. From that time up till 1871 we lived within half a mile of each other. Both farmers. From the time of Discharge for about two years I think he was scarcely able to do any work. Then he got some better. But has never been able to do half a dayes (sic) work since."

In 1887, the Michigan Legislature appropriated \$20,000 for the erection of monuments for Michigan's Regiments on Gettysburg's Battlefield. In the spring of 1889, the monuments were completed. That of the 24th Michigan Infantry was located in the western part of McPherson's Woods where its first battle line had been formed. It is quite elaborate.

On June 3, 1889, Detroit newspapers sent out a plea for flowers to adorn the graves of the dead heroes of Gettysburg at the Dedication of the Michigan Monuments.

On June 21, 1889, in the Ypsilanti Commercial's, Ypsilanti Township column, was noted this article, "Messrs. Frank and Wm. Shier, Sheldon Crittenden and Levi Freeman took the trip to Gettysburg last week."

When Sheldon E. Crittenden returned home, he was in charge of the family farm as his father, Mortimer had been struck by lightning in 1865 and killed. Sheldon married Elizabeth Eaton on September 4, 1867. Four children were born of this union, two sons, Mortimer and Eaton and two daughters, Susan and

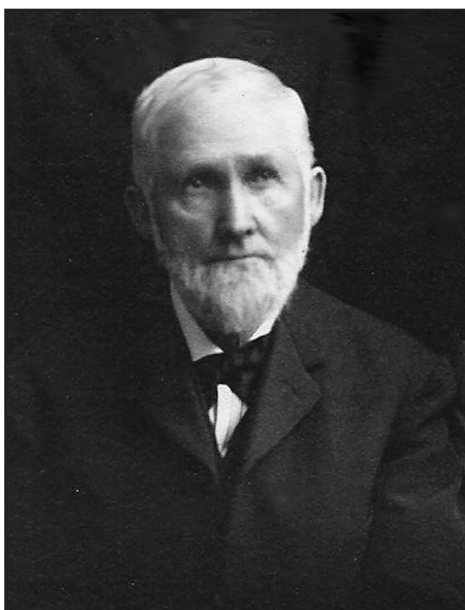


The monument erected in 1889 on the Gettysburg battlefield to honor those who served in the 24th Michigan Regiment. It is located in the western part of McPherson's Woods where the 24th formed their first battle line.

Fanny. The family moved to Kansas in 1871, where they lived for about 12 years. They then returned to Ypsilanti Township and farmed on section 6, when upon retirement, they moved into Ypsilanti city. Elizabeth died December 25, 1921. Sheldon died November 9, 1928, age 91 years. Both were buried in Highland Cemetery, Ypsilanti.

Levi S. Freeman returned to his family farm home. His father, Adan died in 1867. He and his brother, Charles (died 1880) and sister, Lucinda cared for their mother, Almira until her death in 1882. Levi married Anna Blanche Cheshire on October 8, 1881 in Ann Arbor. Two children were born of this marriage, Richard C. and Lucinda A. Son, Richard was tragically killed in a lumber railroad accident in Louisiana in 1905. Levi and family remained on the original Freeman family farm homestead until 1911 when Levi rented the farm and moved into town. He retained ownership of the old homestead up to his death. Levi died at his Ypsilanti city home on October 5, 1919. Anna Blanche died April 16, 1923 at the same home. Levi, his wife and children were buried on the same plot in Highland Cemetery. Levi's gravestone exhibits military credentials, while son, Richard's depicts a "Woodmen of the World" tree stump.

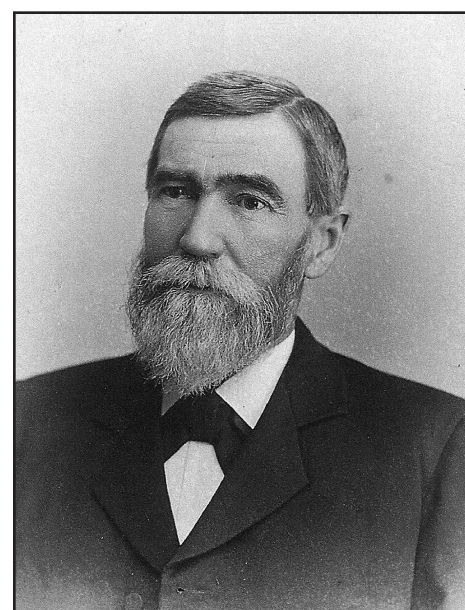
William R. Shier returned to his farm home. On May 1, 1867, he married Susan Ann Eaton in Ypsilanti. Four children were born of this marriage, Henry, Harry, Alice and Robert. At the close of the Civil War, they, their 2 brothers and parents, moved to Kansas, and farmed, where they remained for about 8 years. His father, George K. died and was buried in Kansas. Older brother, Henry and



Sheldon E. Crittenden moved with his family to Kansas in 1871, then after 12 years returned to Ypsilanti Township and eventually to the city of Ypsilanti. Sheldon and his wife Elizabeth are buried in Highland Cemetery.

family remained in Kansas. After William's return to Ypsilanti, he worked for over fifteen years for the U. S. government as a mail carrier for the city of Ypsilanti. He retired in 1909 due to poor health. He suffered a stroke in the summer of 1910 and died November 28, 1911. Susan died July 17, 1929. Both were buried in Highland Cemetery.

Frank Tice Shier returned to his farm home. He married Hester E. Barney on May 21, 1867 in Ypsilanti. Two children were born of this marriage, daughter, Annie and son, S. Morris. They also moved to Kansas and



Levi S. Freeman and his family remained on the original Freeman family farm homestead until 1911 when he rented the farm and moved into town. He retained ownership of the old homestead until his death in 1919.

farmed for about 8 years, after which they returned to Michigan. In Detroit, for 22 years, Frank was eighth Ward foreman for the Department of Public Works. Also, for 18 years, Frank was a grocery store merchant on Michigan Ave. near Fourth St. in Detroit's old "Corktown" neighborhood. Frank died February 28, 1928 in Detroit. Hester died January 20, 1928 in Detroit. Both were buried in Woodmere Cemetery in Detroit.

All four men returned home alive but the war took its toll. Their pension records tell of ongoing lifelong disabilities resulting from injuries and imprisonments. Fortunate were they to have large, loving families eagerly awaiting their return and willing to nurture their recovery.

In this year of 2011, we will celebrate the 150th anniversary of the American Civil War. Blessed be the memory of all who fought there. ■

(Margaret Freeman is a family historian who belongs to the Ypsilanti Historical Society and the Genealogy Society of Washtenaw County and enjoys researching and sharing information about our ancestors.)

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News from the Fletcher-White Archives

By Gerry Pety

I have never seen a spring like this one where you need pontoons on your lawn mower to cut your grass! Good golly!

I surely expected that the Archives would have some rain leakage like past years – but not a drop. Jerry and Al should be commended for fixing a problem that has plagued the lower level of the Museum, where we are located, for decades.

When next you come to the Archives, be advised that we have a new member, Ms. Deirdre Fortino, who like her predecessor Derek, is studying with Dr. Ted Ligibel in the graduate program in Historical Preservation at Eastern Michigan University. My only worry was that being of Italian/Irish descent she did not know how to make some of those wonderful Italian nougat candies. Well, we are keeping her

anyway as she fits in so well with my talented crew of volunteers here in the Archives. Welcome aboard Dee! (Oh, we are going to BUY Dee an Italian candy cookbook.)

Another improvement at the Archives is our ginormous, Minolta 7000, Mk II microfile/microfiche reader with the ability to copy screen images. After having to rely on the Eastern Michigan University Library and the Ypsilanti District Library for years to print out copies of newspaper articles, we now have that capability. The Archives, with an initial gift of \$1,000 from Mr. and Mrs. Farmer, was able to raise the funds to purchase this massive mo-chine. Special thanks go to George Ridenour, who assisted Mr. and Mrs. Farmer with their research, and Marcia McCrary who helped organize a campaign to raise the funds, and to all the contributors who made this important addition to our Archives capabilities possible.

And finally, remember this, when the temperatures this summer go up and up, we are here in *cool comfort*, ready to assist you with any research you might be doing in anything Ypsilanti. ■

(Gerry Pety is the Director of the Fletcher-White Archives and a regular contributor to the Gleanings.)